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Micchā,diṭṭhi Sutta

The Discourse on Wrong View | S 22.153 [Be 22.154]

Theme: Wrong view is the grasping of views

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2012, 2018

Study method

The Micchā,diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.164) & **the Micchā,diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.153) [SD 53.11]

The Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.165) & **the Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.154) [SD 53.12]

The Attānudiṭṭha Pahāna Sutta (S 35.166) & **the Attānudiṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.155) [SD 53.13]

These are 3 pairs of Suttas dealing with wrong view and how to overcome it. For each pair, the Sutta in the *left* column is an introduction to the one in the *right* column.

Ideally, they should be studied according to the above sequence. Even then, the first pair (SD 53.11) should be studied carefully first—this is also the chapter to study if you decide to choose only one pair of Suttas. Study **S 35.164** first, then **S 22.153**, or only the latter at least.

For daily or periodical reflection, you should read or record and listen to **S 22.153 (§§4-5)**. For a double reflection, read or record and listen to **S 35.164 (§§3-9)** first, followed by S 22.153.

The Introductory Notes may be read whenever you need to or are inclined to.

1 Sutta summaries and significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARIES

1.1.1 The Micchā Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.164) is about how to abandon wrong view, that is, through knowing and accepting the fact:

- (1) that the 6 sense-bases—the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind—are impermanent;
- (2) that their respective sense-objects—sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought—are *impermanent*;
- (3) that their respective consciousnesses, too, are *impermanent*;
- (4) that their respective contacts, too, are *impermanent*; and
- (5) that their respective feelings, too, are *impermanent*.

These **30 elements** (*dhātu*)—the 6 internal senses, the 6 external objects, their respective consciousnesses, their respective contacts and their respective feelings—are all impermanent. Knowing and accepting this brings about the abandonment of wrong view (the notion that they are in some way permanent or eternal).

1.1.2 The Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta (S 22.153) is about how **wrong view** (*micchā,diṭṭhi*) arises, that is, by way of clinging (*upādāna*) any of **the 5 aggregates**—*form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness* [§4]. Since these aggregates are all impermanent, trying to grasp them would prove futile, bringing about suffering and displeasure [§5]. Hence, the wise disciple is revulsed with the aggregates, that is, he knows them for what they really are and is detached from them [§6]. On account of this detachment, he is free of craving and suffering, and attains awakening [§7].

1.2 RELATED SUTTAS AND TEACHINGS

1.2.1 Related suttas

reflecting on impermanence

S 35.164 ²	Micchā Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta	SD 53.11(2)
S 35.165 ⁴	Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta	SD 53.12(2)
S 35.166 ⁶	Attānudiṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta	SD 53.13(2)

seeing the 3 characteristics¹

S 22.153 ³	Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta	SD 53.11
S 22.154 ⁵	Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta	SD 53.12
S 22.155 ⁷	Attānudiṭṭhi Sutta	SD 53.13

Table 1.2.1. Views and overcoming them

1.2.1.1 This chapter (**SD 53.11**) contains two related Suttas—the **Micchā Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta** (S 35.-164) [1.1.1] and the **Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.153) [1.1.2]. While the former defines wrong view, the latter shows us how to overcome it by a reflection on impermanence. While the former uses the model of the 30 elements [1.1.1], the latter uses that of the 5 aggregates [1.1.2].

Both the 30 elements and 5 aggregates have the 3 characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*) of *impermanence, suffering and non-self*.⁸ Hence, **wrong view** (*micchā, diṭṭhi*) can be defined as the notion that any state or existence can be permanent, fully satisfying and is or has an abiding self. **Right view** is that all states and existences have the 3 characteristics, and are conditioned as well as conditioning.

1.2.1.2 SD 53.12 comprises two related Suttas—the **Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta** (S 22.165) and the **Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.166). While the former defines self-identity view, the latter shows us how to overcome it. **Self-identity view** (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*),⁹ is, in simple terms, the identifying of oneself with our bodies or minds, that is, seeing some sort of abiding entity in any of **the 5 aggregates**—our body, feelings, perception, karma and consciousness.¹⁰

Self-identity view is the 1st of 3 fetters,¹¹ the breaking of which brings about **streamwinning**.¹² These 3 fetters arise in connection with the 5 aggregates by way of the 4 kinds of self-identity views,¹³ that is, in terms of regarding:¹⁴

¹ SD 53.11 was previously SD 97.22; SD 53.12, previously SD 97.23; SD 53.13, previously SD 97.24.

² Ee S 35.164 = Be S 35.165.

³ Ee S 22.153 = Be S 22.154.

⁴ Ee S 35.165 = Be S 35.166.

⁵ Ee S 22.154 = Be S 22.155.

⁶ Ee S 35.166 = Be S 35.167.

⁷ Ee S 22.155 = Be S 22.156.

⁸ See SD 1.2 (2); SD 18.2 (2.2).

⁹ See SD 40a.8 (3); SD 40a.12 (3.2.4).

¹⁰ On the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k, khandha*), see **(Dve) Khandhā S** (S 22.48/3:47 f), SD 17.1a.

¹¹ The 3 fetters (*saṃyojana*) are (1) self-identity view, (2) spiritual doubt and (3) attachment to rituals and vows: see SD 3.3 (5); **Abhabba Tayo, dhamma S** (A 10.76,6), SD 2.4; **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8. These 3 fetters are, in turn, part of the 10 fetters (*dasa saṃyojana*): SD 10.16 (1.6.6-1.6.8); **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1.4); **(Se-kha) Uddesa S** (A 4.85), SD 3.3 (2).

¹² On streamwinning, see **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

¹³ **Pārileyya S** (S 22.81,12-30), SD 6.1; SD 40a.8 (3.3). The first is rooted in annihilationist view (*uccheda, diṭṭhi*); the rest, in eternalist view (*sassata, diṭṭhi*).

¹⁴ When each of these views is applied to the 5 aggregates, we get the 20 kinds of self-identity views: **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,7.3), SD 40a.9; **Mahā Puṇṇama S** (M 109,10), SD 17.11; **Nadī S** (S 22.93) @ SD 42.18 (2.2.1); **“I”: the nature of identity**, SD 19.1 esp (2.2).

- (1) (an aggregate) as the self;
- (2) the self as possessing (an aggregate);
- (3) (an aggregate) as in the self;
- (4) the self as in (an aggregate).

None of these aggregates—indeed no part of our existence—exists in itself. Both body and mind are closely interrelated and mutually conditioning, as are all the 5 aggregates—they are conditioned as well as conditioning us. Hence, we really are *all interdependent and changing processes*.

1.2.1.3 SD 53.13 comprises two related Suttas—the **Attā'nudiṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta** (S 35.166) and the **Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.155). While the former defines **self-view**, the latter shows us how to overcome it. Self-view or self-based view (*attānudiṭṭhi*) is essentially a belief in an enduring self or soul, that is, some kind of abiding essence that survives death just as it is. Basically, such a wrong view is applied to each of the 6 sense-faculties: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.¹⁵

Essentially, **self-view** is the same as self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*) [1.2.1.2].¹⁶ The only difference is that while *self-view* is broadly applied to any kind of existence in terms of the 5 aggregates, viewing it as a self, *self-identity view* is specially applied to our own self. It is also highlighted as the 1st fetter that needs to be broken before we can walk the path of streamwinning. [1.2.1.2]

Broadly, the term **self-view** is applied to all kinds of existential views, known as the “6 grounds for views” (*diṭṭhi-t, thāna*). These **6 grounds for wrong views** are when the self-notion is applied to the first 4 aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations), self, the nature of the universe and survival, as defined in this pericope from the **Alagaddūpama Sutta** (M 22):

“Here, bhikshus, an ignorant ordinary person, who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma, who has no regard for the true individuals¹⁷ and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma,

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|---|---|
| (1) regards <u>form</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ ¹⁸ |
| (2) He regards <u>feeling</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |
| (3) He regards <u>perception</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |
| (4) He regards <u>formations</u> thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |
| (5) He regards what is
<u>seen, heard, sensed, and known</u> , ¹⁹
<u>found, sought after, mentally pursued</u> , ²⁰ thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’ |
| (6) And this ground for views, namely,
‘ <u>The world is the self</u> ; after death I will be
permanent, everlasting, eternal, unchanging
in nature, eternally the same; I will endure
as long as eternity’—this, too, he regards thus, | ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self.’”
(M 22,15) SD 3.13 (5.1.1); SD 6.1 (5.2) |

The remedy for these 6 grounds for wrong views is the understanding and acceptance that, as regards any of them:

“**This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self**” (*etam mama, eso’ham asmi, eso me attāti*).²¹

¹⁵ **Attā'nudiṭṭhi Pahāna S** (S 35.166), SD 53.13.

¹⁶ See comy ad Sn 1119 (SnA 602).

¹⁷ “True individuals” (*sappurisā*). For def, see **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (3).

¹⁸ These are the threefold grasping (*ti, vidha gāha*) [1.2.2.1]; see §15 ad loc.

¹⁹ See SD 3.13 (5.2.1.2); for details, see **Diṭṭha suta muta viññāta**, SD 53.5.

²⁰ See SD 3.13 (5.2.3).

1.2.2 Related teachings

1.2.2.1 The 3 related false self-notions are at the root of **the 3 graspings** (*ti, vidha gaha*), thus:²²

(1) “This is mine”	(<i>etam mamâti</i>)	the grasping of <u>craving</u>	(<i>taṇhā, gaha</i>)
(3) “This is my self”	(<i>me attā’ti</i>) ²³	the grasping of <u>views</u>	(<i>diṭṭhi, gaha</i>)
(2) “This I am”	(<i>eso’ham asmîti</i>)	the grasping of <u>conceit</u>	(<i>māna, gaha</i>)

1.2.2.2 The root-factor underlying the 3 self-notions is **conception** (*maññāna*), which is synonymous with the teaching of **mental proliferation** (*papañca*). Both conception and mental proliferation are rooted in **latent tendencies** (*anusaya*), the deepest darkness of our unconscious mind. These *latent tendencies* are said to be “unconscious” because they are our karmic potential that works without our even knowing it.²⁴

The 3 “creative” or projective aspects of our latent tendencies, known as **ahaṇ.kara, mamaṇ.kara, mānānusaya**,²⁵ are related to the 3 false notions and the 3 graspings [1.2.2.1] as follows:

(1) “mine”-making	(<i>mamaṇ, kārānusaya</i>)	“This is mine”	the grasping of <u>craving</u>
(2) “I”-making	(<i>ahaṇ, kārānusaya</i>)	“This is my self”	the grasping of <u>views</u>
(3) conceit	(<i>mānānusaya</i>)	“This I am”	the grasping of <u>conceit</u>

1.3 LATENT TENDENCIES AND GRASPING

1.3.1 The 3 latent tendencies

1.3.1.1 To have a better understanding of how **craving, views and conceit** arise and work, we should study their relationship in this schema:

<u>self-notions</u>	<u>the 3 graspings</u> (<i>gaha</i>)	<u>the 3 latent tendencies</u> (<i>anusaya</i>) ²⁶
(1) “mine”-making	(“This is mine”) <u>craving</u> (<i>taṇhā</i>)	sensual lust (<i>kāma, rāgānusaya</i>) ²⁷
(2) “I”-making	(“This is my self”) <u>views</u> (<i>diṭṭhi</i>)	ignorance (<i>avijjā’nusaya</i>)
(3) conceit	(“This I am”) <u>conceit</u> (<i>māna</i>)	aversion (<i>paṭighānusaya</i>)

1.3.1.2 Whenever we feel a **clinging** (*upādāna*) for anything (any thing or person that we objectify), it is always rooted in one or more of the 3 pairs of self-notions—“I”-making (This I am), “mine”-making (This is mine) and conceit (This is my self). Our clinging—the effort to appropriate and accumulate experiences of a person or thing—is rooted in craving, views or conceit.

We may be drawn to an object of clinging because we perceive pleasure in it (a person, a thing or an experience)—this is **an affective clinging** (rooted in hedonic feelings) [1.3.2].

²¹ See **Anatta, lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59,12), SD 1.2. For detailed studies on the 3 graspings, see **I: The nature of identity**, SD 19.1; **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a; **Mine: The nature of craving**, SD 19.3.

²² See SD 6.1 (5); **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59), SD 1.2, applied to the 5 aggregates (§17-21).

²³ The traditional sequence here is (2) “This I am” followed by (3) “This is my self.” This rearrangement is to fit in with the 3 graspings.

²⁴ On latent tendencies, see **Anusaya**, SD 31.3.

²⁵ See **Sammā Diṭṭhi S** (M 9,65-67), SD 11.14.

²⁶ Traditionally arranged as the latent tendencies of “sensual lust,” “of aversion” and of “ignorance.”

²⁷ Also called *rāgānusaya* **Pahāna S** (S 36.3/4:204-206), SD 31.1.

Or, we may be drawn to it on account of a view or *belief*—this is an **intellectual clinging** (rooted in how we think and reason) [1.3.3].

Or, we may be drawn to it on account of measuring another—a feeling of being superior to, or inferior to, or equal to someone—which is an **emotive clinging** (rooted in a powerful sense of arrogance, jealousy, low self-esteem or misperceptions) [1.3.4].

1.3.1.3 Now, we will attempt to link the 3 pairs of Suttas [1.2.1] with what the teachings we have thus far discussed:

<u>reflecting on impermanence</u>			<u>seeing the 3 characteristics</u> ²⁸		
S 35.164	Micchā Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta	SD 53.11(2)	S 22.153	Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta	SD 53.11
S 35.165	Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta	SD 53.12(2)	S 22.154	Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta	SD 53.12
S 35.166	Attānudiṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta	SD 53.13(2)	S 22.155	Attānudiṭṭhi Sutta	SD 53.13

The three pairs of Suttas can be usefully studied in connection with the 3 graspings, the 3 latent tendencies, the 3 characteristics and related teachings in the following way:

- (1) **The Micchā Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta** (S 35.164) applies the reflection on impermanence (*anicca*), and together with **the Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.153) deal with “mine”-making (This is mine), characterized by craving, rooted in sensual lust [1.3.2].
- (2) **The Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta** (S 35.165) applies the reflection on suffering (*dukkha*), and together with **the Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.154) deal with conceit (This I am), characterized by conceit, rooted in aversion. [1.3.4]
- (3) **The Attānudiṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta** (S 35.166) applies the reflection on non-self (*anattā*), and together with **the Attānudiṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.155) deal with “I”-making (This my self), characterized by views, rooted in ignorance. [1.3.3]

All this is graphically represented in this schema:

<u>self-notions</u>	<u>the 3 graspings</u> (<i>gaha</i>)	<u>latent tendencies</u> (<i>anusaya</i>)	
(1) “mine”-making	“This is mine”	<u>craving</u>	sensual lust S 35.164 + S 22.153 [1.3.2]
(2) “I”-making	“This is my self”	<u>views</u>	ignorance S 35.166 + S 22.155 [1.3.3]
(3) conceit	“This I am”	<u>conceit</u>	aversion S 35.165 + S 22.154 [1.3.4]

1.3.2 The latent tendency of sensual lust (*kāma, rāgānusaya*)

Keywords: “mine”-making (This is mine); grasping of craving (*taṇhā, gaha*); latent tendency of sensual lust (*kāma, rāgānusaya*).

1.3.2.1 The Micchā Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.164) and **the Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.153) deal with how **wrong view** arises through “mine”-making (*mamañ, kārānusaya*)—“This is mine” (*etam mama*), characterized by craving (*taṇhā*), deeply rooted in sensual lust (*kāma, rāgānusaya*). Suffering arises when, driven by sensual desire—attachment to any sense-based pleasure—we grasp, craving to make form, feeling, perception, formations or consciousness—the 5 aggregates²⁹—as “mine”: we try to own them or any of them.

²⁸ SD 53.11(2) was previously SD 97.22; SD 53.12(2), previously SD 97.23; SD 53.23(2), previously SD 97.24.

²⁹ On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

1.3.2.2 The Miccha Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.164) instructs on **the nature of wrong view**—how we fail to see *impermanence, suffering and non-self*—in terms of the 30 elements (*dhātu*)—the 6 sense-bases, their respective sense-objects, the 6 consciousnesses, the 6 sense-contacts, and the 6 kinds of feelings. If we take each feeling as being of 3 kinds (pleasant, unpleasant and neutral), then, we have 18 kinds of feelings, and a total of 42 elements. None of these, singly, as a set, or as a whole, or outside of them, is permanent, fully satisfactory, that can be said to be an abiding essence or related to such an essence.

1.3.2.3 The Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta (S 22.153) instructs on **how to abandon wrong view**, that is, to see *impermanence, suffering and non-self in all existence*. Its teaching opens by saying that wrong view arises on account of our **clinging** to any of the 5 aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness).

Clinging, as we well know, is rooted in craving, a thirst for things, which once we have acquired, we grasp (*gaṇhāti*) tenaciously. What we grasp simply takes the shape of our hand, and we have no other use for it. Hence, we keep looking for things, for ever more things, to run after, to cling to, to grasp. And finding them unsatisfactory, we continue with our endless quest for more things.

The aggregates are all impermanent; hence, *suffering or unsatisfactory*, not fit to be regarded as: “This is mine, this I am, this is my self.” They are all of the nature of arising and ending; we cannot own any of them—they are *non-self*. Nothing in this world is ours—the 5 aggregates are all there is that is the world.³⁰ When we understand and accept this, we go on to awaken to liberation.

1.3.3 The latent tendency of ignorance (*avijjā’nusaya*)

Keywords: “I”-making (This is my self); grasping of views (*diṭṭhi, gaha*); latent tendency of ignorance (*avijjā’nusaya*).

1.3.3.1 The Attānudiṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.166) and **the Attānudiṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.155) deal with “I”-making (*ahaṅ, kārānusaya*)—“This my self” (*me attā’ti*)—characterized by grasping of views (*diṭṭhi*), deeply rooted in the latent tendency of ignorance (*avijjā*). Here, “self” (*attā*) refers to something permanent, eternal, some divine essence or immortal soul.

The Buddha unequivocally rejects any such “I”-making notions that leads to the “I-Thou” dichotomy. Such pronouns are simply conventions (*sammatti*) and current usages (*vohāra*) as a means of effective communication. These conventions and usages refer to the 5 aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness³¹—none of which is permanent or have any abiding essence.

Whatever exists or can exist, does so in time; hence, it is impermanent. Whatever is said to exist *outside* of time, or beyond time and space, is either purely imaginative or something unconditioned—there is only one such state, that is, nirvana. It is meaningless to speak of a being or Being that exists eternally (timeless, beyond time) and is immutable (does not change)—then, it has no experience, and we cannot experience it. To exist is to be impermanent and conditioned by time.³²

1.3.3.2 The Attānudiṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.166) instructs on **the nature of self-view**, that is, holding the view of some kind of “self” (*attā*) or essence that is permanent, eternal, some divine essence or immortal soul. We tend to see or look for such an “entity” in the 30 elements (*dhātu*)—the 6 sense-bases, their respective sense-objects, the 6 consciousnesses, the 6 sense-contacts, and the 6 kinds of

³⁰ **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,40), SD 3.13.

³¹ On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

³² See SD 49.8b (7.1.6).

feelings. If we take each feeling as being of 3 kinds (pleasant, unpleasant and neutral), then, we have 18 feelings, and a total of 42 elements. None of these, singly, as a set, or as a whole, or outside of them, have such an essence or entity.

1.3.3.3 The Attānudiṭṭhi Sutta (S 22.155) instructs on **how to abandon self-view**, that is, to see *impermanence, suffering and non-self in all existence*—hence, it is all without any abiding self or essence. The Sutta teaching opens by saying that self-view arises on account of our **clinging** to any of the 5 aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness).³³

Clinging, as we well know, is rooted in craving, a thirst for things, which once we have acquired, we grasp (*gaṇhāti*) tenaciously. What we grasp simply takes the shape of our hand, and we have no other use for it. Hence, we keep looking for things, for ever more things, to run after, to cling to, to grasp. And finding them unsatisfactory, we continue with our endless quest for more things.

The aggregates are all impermanent; hence, *suffering or unsatisfactory*, not fit to be regarded as: “This is mine, this I am, this is my self.” They are all of the nature of arising and ending; we cannot own any of them—they are *non-self*. Nothing in this world is ours—the 5 aggregates are all there is that is the world.³⁴ When we understand and accept this, we go on to awaken to liberation.

1.3.4 The latent tendency of aversion (*paṭighānusaya*)

Keywords: conceit (This I am); grasping of conceit (*māna, gaha*); latent tendency of aversion (*paṭighānusaya*).

1.3.4.1 The Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.165) and **the Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.154) deal with conceit (*māna*)—“This I am” (*eso’ham asmi*), characterized by grasping of conceit, deeply rooted in aversion (*paṭighānusaya*). The habit of **measuring** people, experiences and things—this is called “conceit”—is rooted in the false notion “I am” whatever quality or quantity we choose as our baggage. Invariably, “this” conceit is a vain attempt at measuring form (bodies and things), feelings (how we react to others), perception (how we preconceive others), formations (what we think of them) and consciousness (where we direct our attention).³⁵ It is, as if, we are claiming: “I am this!”

Ironically, we can say that “I” am the measure of man and the world. If we are compelled to measure ourselves against others, we need to be wholesomely mindful of what and how we are measuring. Our true measure, then, is how we are kind to those we whom we see as inferior, how we respect those who are our equals, and how we learn from those who are better than us.

Our *measuring* tendency, as a rule, is an appropriative one. Hence, it is a **reactive** attitude towards others (people, things and experiences) as whether they are worth “having” or *not* worth having. The danger of this reactivity (*paṭigha*) is clear: When we are nothing but what we have, what are we when we lose what we have? We are left with nothing!

1.3.4.2 The Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.165) instructs on **the nature of self-identity view**. Fail to see or understand *impermanence, suffering and non-self*, we identify with one, a set or all of the 30 elements (*dhātu*)—the 6 sense-bases, their respective sense-objects, the 6 consciousnesses, the 6 sense-contacts, and the 6 kinds of feelings. If we take each feeling as being of 3 kinds (pleasant, unpleasant and neutral), then, we have 18 feelings, and a total of 42 elements.

³³ On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

³⁴ **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,40), SD 3.13.

³⁵ On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

When we understand and accept the 3 characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self—or even understand and accept just the first of them—we will be able to see that although we are composed of these 42 elements, they are impermanent, suffering (unsatisfactory), and we do not “own” any of them, as they have no abiding essence.

Since none of the 42 elements is singly, as a set, or all the elements together, or outside of them, is permanent, fully satisfactory, there can be no abiding essence or anything related to such an essence. Hence, there is no way we can really or effectively identify with any of these 42 elements as permanent self or abiding entity.

1.3.4.3 The Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Sutta (S 22.154) instructs on **how to abandon self-identity view**, that is, not to “own” any of the 5 aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—but to see them as being *impermanent, suffering and non-self*. Its teaching opens by saying that wrong view arises on account of our **clinging** to any of the 5 aggregates.

Clinging, as we well know, is rooted in craving, a thirst for things, which once we have acquired, we grasp (*gaṇhāti*) tenaciously. What we grasp simply takes the shape of our hand, and we have no other use for it. Hence, we keep looking for things, for ever more things, to run after, to cling to, to grasp. And finding them unsatisfactory, we continue with our endless quest for more things.

The aggregates are all impermanent; hence, *suffering* or *unsatisfactory*, not fit to be regarded as: “This is mine, this I am, this is my self.” They are all of the nature of arising and ending; we cannot own any of them—they are *non-self*. We are nothing but the 5 aggregates—we are form, feelings, perceptions, formations and consciousness—this is “our world,” so to speak, but we own none of them, in that we have no control whatsoever over them.³⁶ When we understand and accept this, we go on to awaken to liberation.

1.3.5 The 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala, mūla*)

1.3.5.1 We have so discussed how our mind works mostly with the latent tendencies (*anusaya*) [1.2.2.2]. This is on an **unconscious** level, that is, these are a kind of reflexive or reactive processes responding to causes and conditions, and their effects, which, in turn, become new causes and conditions, and so on. In other words, we are not usually even conscious of such processes—such as being powerfully drawn to certain attractions or being overwhelmed with a dark sense of anger and hate.

The roots of such reactive states go down into the dark unconscious depths our latent tendencies of *lust, ignorance and aversion* [1.3.1.1]. However, we can, with some mindfulness, be aware of their presence on a **preconscious** level—as the 3 unwholesome roots of greed, hate and delusion. With strong moral virtue (*sīla*), good attention (*manasikāra*) or ready wisdom (*paññā*), we will be able to defuse these unwholesome thoughts before they turn into karmically potent speech and action.

The careful study of such Suttas and constantly reflecting on the spiritual exercises they have preserved for us will greatly benefit us here and now, even prepare us for the path of streamwinning.

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³⁶ Alagaddûpama S (M 22,40), SD 3.13.

2 Micchā,diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta (S 35.164)

The **Micchā,diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta** (S 35.164) serves as an introduction to the **Micchā,diṭṭhi Sutta** (S 22.153) which follows. While the former reflects on the 30 elements as impermanent [1.1.1], the latter reflects on the 5 aggregates as impermanent.

SD 53.11(2)

Micchā,diṭṭhi Pahāna Sutta

The Discourse on the Abandoning of Wrong Views | S 35.164/4:147 [S:B 35.165]

Traditional: S 4.1.4.1.10 Saṃyutta 4, Saḷāyatana Vg 1, Saḷāyatana Saṃy 4, Catuttha Pṇsk 1, Nandikkhaya Vg 10

Theme: The 6 senses are impermanent

- 1 Then, a certain monk approached the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side. Sitting at one side, the monk said to the Blessed One:
- 2 “Bhante, how should one know, how should one see, so that **wrong view** is abandoned?”³⁷

(1) THE EYE IS IMPERMANENT³⁸

- 3 “Bhikshus,
when one knows, one sees that **the eye**³⁹
is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.
When one knows, one sees that **forms**
are impermanent, then, *wrong view is abandoned.*
When one knows, one sees that **eye-consciousness**
is impermanent, then, *wrong view is abandoned.*
When one knows, one sees that **eye-contact**
is impermanent, then, *wrong view is abandoned.*

Whatever that is **felt** arising with **the eye** as condition—pleasant or unpleasant or neither—when one knows, one sees it to be *impermanent*, wrong view is abandoned.

(2) THE EAR IS IMPERMANENT

- 4 “Bhikshus,
when one knows, one sees that **the ear**
is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.
When one knows, one sees that **sounds**
are impermanent, then, *wrong view is abandoned.*
When one knows, one sees that **ear-consciousness**
is impermanent, then, *wrong view is abandoned.*
When one knows, one sees that **ear-contact**
is impermanent, then, *wrong view is abandoned.*

Whatever that is **felt** arising with **the ear** as condition—pleasant or unpleasant or neither—when one knows, one sees it to be *impermanent*, wrong view is abandoned.

³⁷ *Katham̐ nu kho bhante jānato katham̐ passato micchā,diṭṭhi pahīyatīti.*

³⁸ This is the beginning of the series on the reflection on impermanence [1.2.1.1].

³⁹ The eye is the 1st of **the 30 elements** (*dhātu*), listed here as being “impermanent” [1.1.1].

(3) THE NOSE IS IMPERMANENT

5 “Bhikshus,

when one knows, one sees that

*When one knows, one sees that**When one knows, one sees that**When one knows, one sees that***the nose**is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.**smells**are *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.**nose-consciousness**is *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.**nose-contact**is *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*,

Whatever that is **felt** arising with **the nose** as condition—pleasant or unpleasant or neither—when one knows, one sees it to be *impermanent*, wrong view is abandoned.

(4) THE TONGUE IS IMPERMANENT

6 “Bhikshus,

when one knows, one sees that

*When one knows, one sees that**When one knows, one sees that**When one knows, one sees that***the tongue**is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.**tastes**are *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.**tongue-consciousness**is *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.**tongue-contact**is *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*,

Whatever that is **felt** arising with **the tongue** as condition—pleasant or unpleasant or neither—when one knows, one sees it to be *impermanent*, wrong view is abandoned.

(5) THE BODY IS IMPERMANENT

7 “Bhikshus,

when one knows, one sees that

*When one knows, one sees that**When one knows, one sees that**When one knows, one sees that***the body**is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.**touch**is *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.**body-consciousness**is *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.**body-contact**is *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.

Whatever that is **felt** arising with **the body** as condition—pleasant or unpleasant or neither—when one knows, one sees it to be *impermanent*, wrong view is abandoned.

(6) THE MIND IS IMPERMANENT

8 “Bhikshus,

when one knows, one sees that

*When one knows, one sees that**When one knows, one sees that***the mind**is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.**thoughts [mind-objects]**are *impermanent*, then, *wrong view is abandoned*.**mind-consciousness**

When one knows, one sees that *is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.*
mind-contact
is impermanent, then, wrong view is abandoned.

Whatever that is **felt** arising with **the mind** as condition—pleasant or unpleasant or neither—when one knows, one sees it to be *impermanent, wrong view is abandoned.*

9 When one knows and sees thus, wrong view is abandoned.

— evaṃ —

Micchā Diṭṭhi Sutta

The Discourse on Wrong View

S 22.153

1 At Sāvattḥī.

2 “Bhikshus, when what exists, clinging to what, does **wrong view**⁴⁰ arise?”⁴¹

3 “Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, has the Blessed One as refuge.⁴² It would be good indeed if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the bhikshus would remember it.”⁴³

The 5-aggregate clinging pericope⁴⁴

4 “Bhikshus,

(1) when there is **form**,
 on account of clinging⁴⁵ to form, by adhering to *form*, wrong view arises.⁴⁶

(2) When there is **feeling**,
 on account of clinging to feeling, by adhering to *feeling*, wrong view arises.

⁴⁰ “Wrong view” (*micchā,diṭṭhi*) is “the notion that any state or existence can be permanent, fully satisfying and is or has an abiding self” [1.2.1.1].

⁴¹ *Kismim nu kho bhikkhave sati kim upādāya abhinivissa micchā,diṭṭhi uppajjati.*

⁴² “Has the Blessed One as refuge,” *bhagavaṃ ... dhammā paṭisaraṇā*. This means that 2 things: (1) that the Buddha discovers, proclaims and protects the Dharma, and (2) that the Buddha himself takes the Dharma as his refuge. Hence, even with the Buddha’s passing, the Dharma still exists (as it always does) but is still available to us when we follow the Buddha’s teaching as preserved in the suttas.

⁴³ *Bhagavaṃ mūlakā no bhante dhammā bhagavaṃ nettikā bhagavaṃ paṭisaraṇā. Sādhu vata bhante Bhagavantaṃ yeva paṭibhātu etassa bhāsitaṃ attho. Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressanī ti*, which is stock: **Mahā Dhamma,samādāna S** (M 46,2/1:309 f), **Vīmaṃsaka S** (M 47,3/1:317), **Naḷakapāna S** (M 68,8/1:465), **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,19/3:115), SD 11.4; **S 8.5-11/1:188-196**, **Bālena Paṇḍita S** (S 12.19/2:24), SD 21.1, **Parivīmaṃsanā S** (S 12.51/-2:81), SD 11.5, **Candūpama S** (S 16.3/2:199), **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58/3:66), SD 49.10, **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6/4:208), SD 5.5, **Ānanda S 2** (S 36.16/4:221); A 3.68/1:199, A 8.6/4:158, A 8.83/4:338, A 9.1/4:351, A 10.58/5:106, A 11.20/-5:355. See S:B 404 n227.

⁴⁴ On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

⁴⁵ On the significance of clinging, see (1.3.1.2).

⁴⁶ *Rūpe kho bhikkhave sati rūpaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ abhinivissa micchāndiṭṭhi uppajjati.*

- (3) When there is **perception**, bhikshus,
on account of clinging to perception, by adhering to *perception*, wrong view arises
- (4) When there is **formations**,
on account of clinging to formations, by adhering to *formations*, wrong view arises.
- (5) When there is **consciousness**,
on account of clinging to consciousness, by adhering to *consciousness*, wrong view arises.

The aggregate-characteristic⁴⁷ pericope⁴⁸

5 What do you think, bhikshus:

- (1) **Is form permanent or impermanent?**

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?”⁴⁹

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“But without clinging to what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change would wrong view arise?”⁵⁰

“No, bhante.” [Mv 1.6.42]

- (2) **Is feeling permanent or impermanent?**

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“But without clinging to what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change would wrong view arise?”

“No, bhante.”

- (3) **Is perception permanent or impermanent?**

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“But without clinging to what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change would wrong view arise?”

“No, bhante.”

- (4) **Are formations permanent or impermanent?**

“Impermanent, bhante.”

⁴⁷ On the 3 characteristics, see (1.2.1.1).

⁴⁸ A shorter version of this and foll sections are given as **Arahatā S 1** (S 22.76/3:82 f @ SD 26.7) = **Arahatā S 2** (S 22.77/3:84, without verse).

⁴⁹ *Dukkhaṃ vā sukhaṃ vā*. Here, the alternative tr, “painful,” reminds us that whatever brings us pain or discomfort (bodily or mentally) is not liked by us. When the pain is gone, we feel some pleasure. However, even the pleasurable is impermanent, and when it is gone, we feel pain. Hence, both the painful and the pleasant are “suffering” (*dukkha*). It is useful to understand this difference between pain and suffering. Simply put, pain is natural (we have a physical but conscious body, so we feel pain, whether tolerable or intolerable, which is a sign of irritability or sensitivity of our experiences); suffering is optional (we can train our minds not to be attached to what is pleasant or to reject what is unpleasant, and to regard even the neutral as being impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise.)

⁵⁰ *Yaṃ pañāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ, viparināma, dhammaṃ api nu taṃ anupādāya micchā, diṭṭhi uppajjeyyāti*

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“But without clinging to what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change would wrong view arise?”

“No, bhante.”

(5) **“Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?”**

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“But without clinging to what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change would wrong view arise?”

“No, bhante.”

Revulsion

6 Seeing thus, bhikshus, the tutored noble disciple
 is revulsed [disenchanted]⁵¹ with form,
 is revulsed with feeling,
 is revulsed with perception,
 is revulsed with formations,
 is revulsed with consciousness.

Liberation: The arhat’s review knowledge

7 Through revulsion, he becomes dispassionate.
 Through dispassion, he is free.
 Freed, there arises the knowledge: ‘Free!’⁵²

He understands:

‘Destroyed is birth.

The holy life has been lived.

What needs to be done has been done.

There is no more of this state of being.’” [Mv 1.6.46]

— evaṃ —

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⁵¹ On revulsion, see *Nibbidā*, SD 20.1.

⁵² *Vimuttismiṃ vimuttam iti ñāṇaṃ hoti*, or “When free, there is the knowledge, it (the mind) is free.” Note that the self is not addressed here. On “Free!” see SD 50.1 (3.1.2.2).